

International Journal of Sikh Affairs, wrote to President Bush about the dangerous situation in India, where democratic rights for minorities are under continuing threat. He also published the letter in his magazine.

Dr. Sekhon noted that the interests of the United States and its allies, such as Canada, are likely to be damaged by continuing close cooperation with India. As he observed, although India proudly portrays itself as "the world's largest democracy," it is a country where, as he writes, "democracy has been used to deny freedom, national and human rights, and basic human dignity to the majority." That majority includes Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Dalits, and other minorities.

He notes that in India, the Brahmin class, which is 15 percent of the population, uses the most brutal oppression to suppress and rule the minorities. The caste system is still rigorously enforced, despite being made illegal in 1950. It is used to keep the people down, backed by violent repression. He notes that in 1948, the Indian government promised the people of Kashmir a plebiscite on their status. Punjab was promised sovereignty at the time of Indian independence. Those promises have not been kept and any effort to claim what was promised has been met with brutality that has resulted in the murders of over 250,000 Sikhs, over 300,000 Christian Nagas, over 90,000 Kashmiri Muslims, Muslims and Christians elsewhere in the country, and tens of thousands of other minorities. Yet our policy-makers insist on treating India both as a democratic country and as an ally, despite its longstanding and still current friendship with Russia, as well as its coziness with the mullahs of Iran, to whom it has sold heavy water and other components.

Dr. Sekhon cites the attack on the Golden Temple as another example of India's effort to eliminate the minorities and subsume them into a Hindu state.

Madam Speaker, I call on all my colleagues, especially those who are promoters of India, to read this devastating letter. It is quite damaging to India and it is right on target. It will give you essential information on the lack of basic liberties in that country.

We can make a difference, Madam Speaker. Instead of cozying up to India and trying to cut deals with them in the name of stability, it is time to stop our aid and our trade to pressure India to allow all its people to enjoy basic human rights. And it is time to put the U.S. Congress on record in support of self-determination for all the peoples and nations of the subcontinent through a free and fair plebiscite on their status. Isn't that the fair and responsible way to handle questions like this? Isn't that the way democracies do it? Why is India afraid of real democracy?

Madam Speaker, I would like to insert Dr. Sekhon's excellent letter into the RECORD. Again, I urge everyone to read it. It will prove very informative.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
SIKH AFFAIRS,  
January 24, 2007.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,  
President, United States of America,  
The White House, Washington, DC.

SOUTH ASIA: INTERESTS, PERMANENT ALLIES,  
WORLD PEACE AND THE ROLE OF THE UNITED  
STATES IN THE REGION

I am a citizen of Canada and a member of the Canadian Sikh community. I retired from service in public health as a micro-

biologist, research scientist, administrator and academic a few years ago. I am now active in work for human rights. These rights are not peculiar to a people or country; they protect the entire human race. I am expressing below my concerns over the likelihood of damage to long-term interests of the United States of America, its allies, the NATO forces, Canada in particular. The pain of sufferings families of North America, in Europe, the Middle East and South Asia is hard to ignore. The irony is that the more the U.S. tried to ameliorate conditions, the worse they have become.

The people of North America know very well the objectives of the United States (U.S.) and the hurdles faced in leading the world during much of the 20th and in the current 21st centuries. The people of the U.S. and their elected leaders have devoted a lot of time, money and precious resources in manpower and management for the good of the mankind to make the world better and safer. Despite all the good intentions of the democratic world it has been struggling to find a basis for lasting world peace. I believe that the long-term interests of the United States and the world at large are complementary. The U.S. leadership is good for the world. Yet, increasingly fewer people believe that to be true. Is there anything amiss?

I firmly believe that the United States and its allies eagerly want to prevent the sufferings of friendly peoples whose governments they have influence over. While we find the stern hand of the U.S. military operating against enemies, there is little effort to impose the same principles of human freedom and dignity on "friends". Much of South Asia is democratic; India boasts of being the largest democracy in the world. Yet it is in India—more than anywhere else—where democracy has been used to deny freedom, national and human rights, and basic human dignity to the majority. As the Hon. Dana Rohrabacher, (R-Cal) had said as far as the minorities (the Sikhs, Muslims in general, Muslims of the Internationally Disputed Areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Christians, Dalits, Adivasis or the indigenous native people, and other non-Hindu, non-Brahmin) are concerned, India is the Nazi Germany for them (Tim Phares 2006 Int J Sikh Affairs 16(1), 40-42 ISSN 1481-5435).

Congressman ROHRABACHER's assessment is accurate and well justified; it can be the focal point of a new beginning with India. The question is: how could a country, which is the world's largest democracy, sustain caste apartheid and pogroms against minorities without facing recrimination? It is done by mis-definition and misrepresentation the world is too busy to try and unravel. India is not a nation and has not even tried to become a nation during the 60 years that it has been "free". It has relied entirely on brute military force to crush any people that demanded its rights. The fact is the Muslims are a majority in Jammu and Kashmir, the Sikhs are a majority in the Punjab and Hill tribes of Assam are mostly Christian. The People of Jammu and Kashmir were promised a plebiscite that was endorsed by the United Nations. The Sikhs were promised their separate state Khalistan by the Congress leaders in exchange for rejecting Pakistan's offer of the same. The Tribal peoples of Assam were also promised "freedom" if they sided with the Congress Party against the British. Now that these peoples demand what was promised, India has unleashed the most diabolical genocide and an international campaign to demonize their struggle. The British Raj lasted as long as it did because it was founded on recognition of India as multiple nations. How can a country call itself a democracy when it discards its

very foundation—the right of national self-determination?

India aspires for its leaders—M.K. Ghandi and J.L. Nehru—to be recognized with other great leaders of the democratic world like George Washington, Franklin D Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, J.F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, and William Jefferson Clinton. But it cannot even begin to secure that position until it can show that they stood up for the oppressed within the country and without. India has invaded each one its neighbours, overtly or covertly; if it gave in to any demand, it sought to hurt twice as much elsewhere. The Untouchables or Dalits—who are a majority in several states of India and constitute 65 % of its population—were promised "reservation" of seats in the parliament, in education and jobs. Even after 60 years, it is still denied to backward castes and to Muslims. India uses "democracy" as means to fudge issues and deny rights by never ending arguments in circles. That is the experience of the people in the country and neighbours who live in dread of roads being closed or rivers being diverted.

The devious policies and broken promises is the hallmark of India today. The Sikhs have been the worst victims. They founded the first secular and sovereign state in South Asia by Sikh monarch Ranjit Singh in 1799 that was "annexed" by treaty to the British Empire on 14th March, 1849. In June 1984, the Darbar Sahib Complex which includes the Supreme Seat of Sikh Polity, The Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar (mistakenly known as Golden Temple of Amritsar), which is the Vatican of the Sikh faith, was assaulted by the Indian Army killing 20,000 devotees who were inside the temple and their leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was martyred. When the Sikh guards of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi avenged the assault assassinating her, the worst pogrom was unleashed upon the Sikhs all over India that resulted in 250,000 Sikhs—mostly young men and their families—who were mercilessly killed. Indian diplomats talk about the tradition of non-violence in India of which Mahatma Gandhi is considered to be a universal symbol. But the truth is that India is violent but only to the weak; when confronted with strong and powerful the Brahmin response is obsequious folding of hands. This manner of greeting appears to be show of humility. But it is actually a statement that the person being greeted is of low birth and is untouchable.

On 15th of August 1947, the British handed over political power to the "unelected" Hindu leadership. But the Hindus/Brahmins (neither a religion nor a culture) were only 15 % of the population; how could they be the successors of the British Empire in India. Once installed in power, they have relied on a combination of hate (for people of foreign faiths or of low birth), guile and stratagem far more complex than any Machiavelli. The record of their rule over India speaks eloquently how Hindus/Brahmins have been master-mind in persecution of faith minorities and the low caste majority of native peoples who are deemed to be inferior by birth in their unique faith. Through Article 25 of the Indian Constitution 1950, the Sikh, the Buddhists and Jains and all the Untouchables, all of who are victims of oppression and apartheid, are denied their separate identity and deemed to be Hindus. The Sikh faith founded by Guru Nanak Sahib was a rebellion to reject the caste "apartheid" enforced by the Hindus of Brahmin caste. The irony is that when freedom came, the Sikhs were declared to be Hindus (long haired Hindus) albeit of the renegade variety, against the teachings of its founder, Guru Nanak Sahib, and the Sikhs' Holy Scripture, Adi Guru Granth Sahib. It is difficult to portray